(e) if not, the amount and number of monthly tickets sold during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). Season tickets are issued for various stations from Panagarh on Panagarh-Howrah section via Main upto a distance of 150 Kms.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) 1095 season tickets giving an earning of Rs. 1.49 lakhs during 1994-95 and 1095 season tickets giving an earning of Rs. 1.69 lakhs during 1995-96 were issued at Panagarh for different stations on Panagarh-Howrah section via Main.

Licensed Porters

3024. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the official strength of Licensed Porters, as on August 15, 1994 at Itwari, Kanhan, Kamptee, Bhandara Road, Tumsar Road and Tirora stations of the South Eastern Railway, Station-wise;

(b) the additional number of Licensed Porters were recruited for each station mentioned in (a) above to handle parcel traffic with effect from September 1,1994;

(c) whether Railway Board had issued instructions to abolish contract system for Parcel handing work, where contractors demanded revision in rates due to increase in Labour rates and have the work managed by recruiting licensed porters; and

(d) if not, the time by which the General Manager, South Eastern Railway propose to introduce new system of working?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) the official strength of Licensed Porters as on 15.8.94 is as under:

Itwari	7	Kanhan	NIL
Kamptee	8	Bhandara Road	5
Tumsar Road	8	Tirora	NIL

(b) The additional number of licensed porters engaged at these station with effect from September 1,1994 is as under:

Itwari	33	Kanhan	4
Kamptee	16	Bhandara Road	16
Tumsar Road	16	Tirora	8

(c) and (d). No instructions have been issued by the Board to abolish the contract system for parcel handling work. At some station on South Eastern Railway licensed porters are being utilised to handle parcel traffic in addition to their normal function of carrying passengers luggage.

[Translation]

Package for Rural Telephone Subscribers

3025. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the package announced by the former Minister of Communications in December, 1995 for the rural telephone subscribers;

(b) the progress made in this regard so far; and

(c) the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The information is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c). Most of the features of the rural package have been implemented in almost all parts of the country.

The salient features of the package announced in November. 1995 are as under :

1. Free calls have been increased to 250 from present 150 per billing cycle for rural subscribers.
2. Registration fee for new connections has been reduced to Rs. 1000/- from existing Rs. 2000/- for rural subscribers working from exchange systems of below 10,000 lines.
3. Telephone rental has been reduced to Rs. 100/- bimonthly from existing Rs. 150/- for rural subscribers of exchange systems of 100 lines to below 1000 lines.
4. The installation charges for telephone connections in telephone exchanges of less than 500 lines shall be maintained at Rs. 300/- upto 31.3.1998 for all rural subscribers.
5. Call charges for 200 calls above 250 free calls have been reduced by 25% for rural subscribers.
6. Commission payable to franchisees of local and STD PCOs in Panchayats and PCOs provided under Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojna has been increased from present 20% to 50% on gross turnover.
7. The STD/ISD PCO franchisees in rural areas are to be paid commission @ 25% on the gross turnover per month.
8. In non-rural areas of the predominantly hilly states of J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal and Kumaon hill areas of U.P. Sikkim and 7 North Eastern States (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura) as well as in the Hilly/ tribal areas of the rest of the country, the franchisees are to be paid commission @ 20% on a gross turnover upto 50,000/- and